

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 9, 13-15 and 20 are amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-9, 12, 13, 16 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Applicants' acknowledged prior art (APA) in view of Horiuchi et al; and Claims 10, 11, 14, 15 and 17-19 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter.

Claims 1-9, 12, 13, 16 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over APA in view of Horiuchi et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to an electric power feeding line switching method in which a control signal is superposed on an optical communication signal that transmits through optical fiber transmission paths between terminal stations, which is supported in the specification at least at page 42, lines 3-12. Independent Claims 9 and 13 include similar features.

In a non-limiting example, Figures 1 and 6B show that an optical monitor signal is superposed on an optical communication signal F1 and is transmitted along paths 21 and 22. The superposed optical monitor signal is further transmitted through the isolator 52f in the submarine branching station and on to the land-based terminal stations 1, 2 and 3 (see the specification at page 42, lines 3-12).

As an advantage, control of the electric power feeding lines is facilitated among the land-based terminal stations and the submarine branching station (see the specification at page 42, line 13, to page 43, line 12).

In contrast, Horiuchi et al merely discusses a system in which a control signal component of 1.4 μm that is superimposed on a 1.5 μm band signal light is removed and is not passed on through a receiving section. Horiuchi et al describes at column 4, lines 4-9 that the optical filter 18 includes an interference filter that transmits the 1.5 μm band optical component but reflects the 1.4 μm band optical component toward directions other than the waveguide direction to the optical fiber 10, effectively preventing the control signal from continuing along the communication path.

Accordingly, Horiuchi et al does not teach or suggest a control signal superimposed on an optical communication signal which transmits through optical fiber transmission paths between terminal stations. Further, APA also does not teach or suggest the features of the claimed invention. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted independent Claims 1, 9 and 14 and each of the claims depending therefrom are allowable.

Further, Claims 14 and 15 and the specification are amended to correct minor informalities and to better conform with U.S. patent practice. It is believed no new matter is added.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

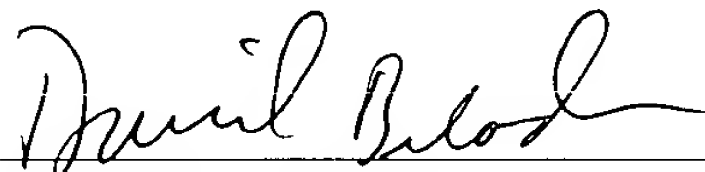
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